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ABSTRACT

This module on communication in health occupations is one of eight modules designed for individualized instruction in health occupations education programs at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. This module contains an introduction to the module topic and one learning experience. The learning experience contains six activities (e.g., read the information sheet provided in the module on the patient interview, role play a patient interview, and role play the the taking of medical history). Concluding the module is a student self-check with a model answer key and a student performance assessment form for use by the instructor. (JH)

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HEALTH OCCUPATIONS

MODULE

COMMUNICATION IN HEALTH OCCUPATIONS -- II

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Temple University

of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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January, 1978

HEALTH OCCUPATIONS

MODULE

For the teacher...

ABOUT THE MODULE

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Temple University
of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

January, 1977

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For the teacher...

ABOUT THE MODULE

ORGANIZATION

Each module is designed to help the student to gain competence in an area considered important in health occupations.

Each module contains an introduction and a series of learning experiences. Overviews, which precede each learning experience except the final one, provide at a glance brief descriptions of what each learning experience entails.

Two types of objectives form the basis of the learning experiences: a terminal objective and enabling objectives. The enabling objectives are designed to help the student achieve the terminal objective. Each learning experience has activities designed to facilitate accomplishing the objective, and by use of the feedback devices provided, the student should be able to determine if he/she has reached each objective.

The first learning experience is designed to provide the needed background information. The remaining learning experiences are designed to provide the opportunity to apply that information in a practice situation. The final learning experience always requires the demonstration of the skill in an actual school situation.

PROCEDURE

1) Briefly discuss the purpose of the module.

2) Direct the students to review the introduction, the objectives and overviews preceding each learning experience, including the final learning experience.

3) The student needs to complete only those modules and/or learning experiences covering skills he/she does not already possess.

4) Answer the questions related to the module.

5) If the student decides that he/she is already competent in the specified area, provide him/her with an opportunity to "test out." Administer the "Final Learning Experience."

6) Instruct students who do not have the competencies indicated, to complete the module.

7) In cooperation with the student, determine a schedule for completing the module.

8) Instruct the student to make the necessary arrangements with you, the resource person, when he/she is ready to take the final learning experience.

9) If the student is unsuccessful in completing the final experience, instruct him/her to meet with you, the resource person, in order to provide for recycling through the module, or for completing some other activity suggested by the student or resource person and commonly agreed upon.

TERMINOLOGY

Actual School Situation -- refers to a situation in which one is actually a student in a real school.

Occupational Specialty Area -- refers to the student's major area of emphasis within the health occupations program.

Peers -- refers to fellow students who are used to:
1) role-play students, etc.,
2) critique the student's performance, and
3) participate in discussions.

Unless otherwise specified, these peers should be persons within the student's own occupational specialty.

Resource Person, Instructor -- refers to the person in charge of the student's educational program, i.e., the teacher who is guiding the student in taking the module.

You, Student -- refers to the person who is taking the module.

HEALTH OCCUPATIONS MODULE

designed for the purpose
of individualizing instruction
in the health related occupations
program.

Prepared by...

Temple University of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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The Pennsylvania Department of Education

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INTRODUCTION

TECHNIQUES OF COMMUNICATION IN HEALTH CAREERS

Patients have valid complaints that often widen the communication gap between patient and health worker. The patient's fears shut off the avenues of communication. The patient may be afraid to ask. It is the duty of the health worker to provide reassurance to the patient, if necessary.

Poor communication is often due to lack of time. The members of the health care team have many responsibilities and cannot give full attention to each individual patient. There are sometimes faulty communications among the staff members in regard to who has told what to a patient. The patient's chief complaint is, "They never tell you anything. The patient is the last to know." The health worker, regardless of his specialty, should be familiar with the patient with whom he is working. One way of becoming familiar is to review the nurse's notes and the progress notes of the physician. If this is an office or clinic visit, review the last comments written about the patient.

Poor attitudes of the staff, leading to forgetting the rights of the patient, are detrimental to effective communications. Because he is anxious about his illness, the patient may have difficulty in comprehending things. He may also have a faulty memory. The more that is told to the patient, the greater the chance of his forgetting some of it. Explain things clearly. Age has some influence on memory, but it is mainly the anxious patient who forgets.

When the patient enters the hospital, he is occasionally given printed brochures listing the practical, day-to-day aspects of the hospital routine.

Information in these booklets and procedure sheets may consist of:

1. History of the hospital, with identification of the staff members.
2. Admissions procedures.
3. Visiting hours.
4. Religious services.
5. Personal services, such as barber or hairdresser.
6. Library activities.
7. Mealtimes.
8. Money and valuables protection.
9. Department schedules.
10. Smoking regulations.
11. Safety procedures.
12. Telephone services.
13. Television services.
14. Gifts and food regulations.
15. Discharge procedures.

Learning Experience I

Overview

Enabling Objective — Demonstrate knowledge of communicating with the patient in the interview situation.

Activity 1 — Read the Information Sheet on "The Patient Interview."

Activity 2 — Role-play a patient interview.

Activity 3 — Read and study the materials on "The History and Physical of a Patient."

Activity 4 — Role-playing the taking of a medical history.

Activity 5 — Play the memory game.

Activity 6 — Complete the "Self Check."

Feedback — Compare the answers on the completed "Self Check" with the "Model Answers."

(Activity 1)

Information Sheet: THE PATIENT INTERVIEW

When a patient enters a hospital or visits the doctor's office, he has a talk with the doctor or a health care worker. This is called the interview. It is the initial step in entering the patient into the health care system. The interview can be, as we said, part of a visit to the doctor's office or to the hospital. It can also be part of a visit to a medical clinic, where many health care workers, including doctors, nurses, technologists and others, work together as a team to help the patient improve. Before the patient can be helped, however, it is necessary to find out the facts about him and his illness. Therefore, the interview is necessary. In it, the patient is asked questions about his illness and other important matters.

Good questioning techniques are a basic requirement of the patient interview. The nurse and health care worker should always be aware of specific clues that may communicate valuable information, and they should probe for this information in a diplomatic and careful way. Here are some questions that might be asked of a patient during an interview:

1. Have you ever been in the hospital before?
2. Which hospital? For what condition? How long ago?
3. Have you ever had this study performed before?
4. When? Where? Why?
5. Why does the doctor want you in the hospital this time?
6. Why does the doctor want you to have this test?
7. Are you allergic to any food or medicine?
8. Do you have trouble sleeping?
9. Do you have any questions about being in the hospital?
10. Do you have any questions about this test?
11. Do you have any questions about this treatment?

Sometimes a patient visits a specialist. A specialist is a doctor who mainly treats patients for one type of illness. The interview will then include questions which are important for learning about that particular illness.

If the interview is unsuccessful in communicating the necessary information, the entire course for the patient and for you, the health care worker, can be difficult. The goals of the interview are the medical history and the physical examination. Although the medical history and, especially, the physical examination are duties performed primarily by the physician, the nurse and other health care workers are major assistants in this process. The interview may be considered to be more than the specific exchange of information in the medical setting. It may begin with the first telephone call to make an appointment and may end with the billing process. In short, the interview involves the entire ongoing communication between the patient and the health care workers.

Although the doctor is a helping person, he has authority in the health care team and commands respect. For this reason, some of the patients may be afraid of the doctor, and they may not be able to tell him everything they wish. This is when you and other health workers can help the doctor. You, the health care worker, can also communicate with the patient. There are times when he may feel better talking about his illness with you than with the doctor. Keep in mind the other person's feelings when working with the patients. Communication is a two-way street. There are also things the patient wants to know. Within the limitations of the code of ethics of your profession or institution, the patient's questions should be answered truthfully. Every reasonable effort should be made to include the patient in the information-sharing process.

(Activity 2)

ROLE-PLAYING A PATIENT INTERVIEW

Pretend that you and your classmates are involved in patient interviews. Play the parts in little plays that you make up as you go along.

Select one of the health occupations as your field for this purpose. For example:

1. Licensed Practical Nurse
2. Electrocardiogram Technician
3. X-ray Technician
4. Dental Assistant
5. Home Health Aide
6. Medical Laboratory Assistant
7. Medical Assistant
8. Other

Pair off. You and a classmate imagine that you are a patient and a health care worker in a particular field. Conduct a patient interview in that situation.

Take notes. Write down questions and answers. Practice paying close attention to what is being said. Be a good listener as well as a good speaker.

Discuss the results of this role-playing interview with your classmates and your resource person.

(Activity 3)

Read and study the materials on "Physical Examination" and "Medical History." Pay particular attention to the "Medical History" information. For your reference, a sample* Physical Examination sheet is provided. (Remember: It is the function of the physician to complete this sheet.)

The health worker must always be prepared for questions from the patient. Some of the questions may be:

*See your instructor for this sample.

1. What is this pill for?

2. Why am I having this X-ray?

3. What does my E.K.G. (Electrocardiogram) show?

4. What is my Blood Pressure?

5. When will the "stitches" (sutures) be removed?

6. What time will the doctor be here?

7. When may I go home?

The key to answering these questions is knowing your limitations. There are questions that should not be answered by you. This is governed by the Code of Ethics of your profession or institution.

(Activity 4)

ROLE-PLAYING A MEDICAL HISTORY

After reading and studying the materials of Activity 3, take the medical history of one of your classmates, who will play the role of a patient.

Use the medical history outline.

Take notes. Write down questions and responses, unless this interferes with the communication between you and the "patient."

(Activity 5)

MEMORY GAME

Memory is important in all stages of communication. Memory is the ability to retain or recall past experience. This means that you can remember things that have already happened.

It is very important to develop your ability to remember things. This will be helpful when you work with patients in the health care field.

As memory practice, play the following game:

Bring together as many of your classmates as possible.
Form a circle.
Select a person who will be the "starter."
The starter begins the game. He calls out a word relating to communication, for example, "memory."
Moving in a clockwise direction, each person calls out another word relating to communication and repeats all the words mentioned previously.

See how far you can go around the circle before someone forgets a word.

Have fun!

(Activity 6)

SELF CHECK

1. The _____ is the first step in entering the patient into the health care system.

2. The goals of the interview are the _____ and the _____.

3. Good _____ are the requirements of the patient interview.

4. List five key questions that may be asked of the patient.

   1) _____
   2) _____
   3) _____
   4) _____
   5) _____

5. The health worker should probe in a _____ and _____ way for information.

6. Summarize the "Patient Interview" conducted in Activity 2.

7. Summarize the "Medical History" taken in Activity 3.

Feedback: MODEL ANSWERS

1. The interview is the first step in entering the patient into the health care system.

2. The goals of the interview are the medical history and the physical examination.

3. Good questioning techniques are the requirements of the patient interview.

4. Five key questions that may be asked of the patient (examples -- there are others):

   1) Have you ever been in the hospital before?

   2) Which hospital? For what condition? How long ago?

   3) Have you ever had this study performed before?

   4) When? Where? Why?

   5) Why does the doctor want you in the hospital this time?

5. The health worker should probe in a diplomatic and careful way for information.

6. (Summary)

7. (Summary)

STUDENT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FORM

Communicate with Patients

	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE	
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1. Conducted a patient interview in a role playing situation with a classmate.		
2 Talked clearly and distinctly in simple terms that a patient could understand.		
3. Role played with a classmate a question and answer session to obtain information for a Medical History and Physical Examination; asking at least five questions in Activity 6, that may be asked of the patient.		
4. Practiced professional ethics during this question and answering session.		
5. Recorded answers on proper forms.		
6. Wrote legibly.		
7. Spelled correctly.		